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PAY ACCORDING TO WORK FOR YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS

Gojko Polovina

The following note preceded the original article: Due to the importance of this problem, this article is published to present to our readers more material for discussions on our new salary system. The editorial board, however, disagrees with the basic principles advocated in this article.

Certain difficulties have been encountered in trying to solve the salary problem of Yugoslav officials. This problem is partly inherited from the former government, under which most Yugoslav officials received their education and training, and under which many received their initial classification grades, salaries, and positions. Other difficulties are caused by the fact that the present salary system is based on the principles determining relations between the state and its officials in a socialist society, patterned on the USSR.

It is often heard that Yugoslavia formerly had a well-regulated system of automatic advancement for officials in salaries, grades, and positions, based solely on educational qualifications, examinations, seniority, etc. The truth is that such a system of automatic promotions did not exist, for advancement in salaries, grades, and positions depended exclusively on ministers and other higher administrative officials. There were, however, certain legal procedures, not at all automatic, but quite just and practical, which partially limited the power of these ministers over promotions.

The new Yugoslavia did not have to eliminate the former system of advancement based on educational qualifications, examinations, seniority, etc., which was quite just, but it did have to eliminate the power of ministers and other high officials over promotions. Despite the fact that educational qualifications and seniority were just criteria for promotions which protected employees from arbitrary actions of superiors, such criteria could not be transplanted directly and fully adopted by the new Yugoslavia.

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Since one of the basic tasks of every socialist revolution is complete destruction of the bourgeois state administration and the creation of a completely new administration, both in form and content, the people's revolutionary authorities could not be hampered by any formal or legal provisions of the former government. All the so-called acquired rights of prewar Yugoslav officials, based on educational qualifications, examinations, seniority, etc., were actually obstacles to a complete destruction of the remnants of the former system and the creation of a new state administration. In the former bourgeois system, they were just criteria for they were created by it and for it.

Such acquired rights were possessed mostly by those officials who did not participate in the armed revolution against the occupation. Recognition of these rights in the first years after the liberation would have put many officials of the former government in responsible economic, administrative, and other positions. Subconsciously leaning toward the former government, they would have made it difficult to destroy the former state administration and create a new one. It was therefore logical and imperative that Yugoslavia adopt new criteria and recognize the acquired rights only in a limited way.

State officials are legally defined as administrative and professional assistants in agencies representing the state government and its subordinate agencies, and are primarily employees of the agency for which they work. Since the official conception was that economic enterprises were agencies through which the state establishes its policy in the economic sector, then state officials were not only those employed by state agencies, but also personnel working for state establishments and administrative offices of state enterprises. There were some cases where officials of some state enterprises, such as crop-purchase enterprises, arbitrarily took upon themselves the functions of general state administration.

In accurate and complete terminology, state officials are members of society charged with the performance of various functions in state agencies and in administrations of special societies. The designation of state officials can best be applied to employees of state agencies who do general administrative work.

Taking for granted that the state is the basic economic power of socialism, which directs the entire cultural and economic life of society, the Yugoslav salary system does not make any distinction between officials of state agencies, establishments, and enterprises. Although the positions of these officials are very similar, a complete disregard of the type of work, its quality, and the way it is performed is the greatest shortcoming of the Yugoslav system. Another shortcoming arises from the fact that although officials in state agencies, establishments, and enterprises are all put in the same salary category, there is no uniform pay system for workers in production enterprises.

Since the provisions of the law regarding state officials are not sufficiently clear, there is danger of disregarding the principle of paying employees in accordance with the type of service, importance of work, quantity and quality of work and degree of responsibility involved. A rather pronounced tendency has emerged which considers that wages are determined on the basis of the type of service and importance of work performed, and not by the quantity and quality of work performed.

Should a salary system disregard the principle of wages according to work, and replace this principle with type of service, importance of work, and degree of responsibility involved? Such disregard would be justified only when a job involves an entirely different work process.

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The basic shortcoming in the formulation of the Yugoslav law was that it substituted for the principle of wages based on quantity of work performed, the principle of wages based on type of service. Type of service cannot be considered an objective and real criterion upon which to base wages. It merely indicates the field and form in which actual work is done, which may be used as an element in determining the quantity and quality of work necessary to satisfy certain social demands, but in no case can it be taken as a criterion for the determination of wages.

The importance of the work and the degree of responsibility involved, used as basic principles for determining wages, were other shortcomings of the Yugoslav wage system. These principles may only be used as elements for determining the quantity and quality of work performed, not for determining wages.

The above applies only to wages. It does not apply to pensions or exceptional work situations where the amount of work performed is not proportional to the wages paid. Any deviation from the principle of paying wages according to work can only lead to increased bureaucratic and antisocialist tendencies. Yugoslavia is, therefore, presented with the problem of how to apply this principle in paying state officials, and giving due consideration to all special conditions and differences involved in their work.

For every pay system based on this principle, the basic problem is to determine the criterion for measuring the quantity and quality of work performed. Since the work performed by officials is not concerned with production, can it be evaluated from its results, even though the results cannot be measured in kilograms, meters, kilowatt-hours, etc? Observing and evaluating these results presents specific and complicated problems. Natural indexes, such as are used in production, cannot be used for this evaluation. Some of the following indexes can be used. Salaries received by officials can be analyzed over an extended period of time. The duration of lectures and the number of students attending them can be taken into consideration for teachers, the number of patients and examinations performed, for doctors, etc.

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